

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES JUNE 7, 2004

Chair Darrel Fournier called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:03 p.m. at the Maine Emergency Services conference room, 16 Edison Drive, Augusta. Members present were Michael Albert, Jack Berry, Jay Bradshaw, Senator Bruce Bryant, John Cannon, John Dean, Chief Darrel Fournier, Albert Godfrey, Sr., Geoffrey Maker, Senator Richard Nass, Harty Norris, Chief Jethro Pease, Charles Soltan, Leslie Wiles (for Bill Williams), Steve Willis and Susan Pinette (staff). Members excused from today's meeting included Representative Patricia Blanchette, Representative Thomas Bull, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Art Cleaves, Representative Robert Duplessie, Edward Johnston and David Wacker. Vicki Schmidt from Maine Fire Training and Education (MFT&E) attended as guest of the Fire Commission.

Fire Commission members reviewed the minutes of the May meeting. Members agreed that the Elections committee did not recommend two-year terms for Fire Commission officers and agreed to strike the two references under Reports of Committees.

A motion by Charlie Soltan, seconded by Richard Nass, to accept the minutes of May 3, 2004 as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports of Committees

Fire Commission members discussed the March 2004 "Blaine House Conference on Emergency First Response". Members suggested ways to improve the 2005 conference. Comments and suggestions included more breakout sessions, a larger facility with improved sound system (Augusta Civic Center), evaluations from attendees, MMA's agreement to provide assistance with mailings, attendance etc., and the addition of law enforcement as well as fire service and EMS participants.

A motion by Richard Nass, seconded by Jethro Pease, that the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission sponsors a "Blaine House Conference on Emergency First Response" in 2005. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Fournier was chosen to chair the Conference on Emergency First Response Committee and appointed Steve Willis, Al Godfrey and John Dean to serve on the committee. Members also agreed to hold the conference on a Friday, if possible.

Fire Commission members received the Training Facilities Committee's final report. Steve Willis, representing the committee, summarized the contents and recommendations of the report. Members discussed the need for a formal study and potential sites for a training facility. Discussion of the formal study included the scope of the study, the need to be specific, cost, and the necessity of impartiality. Members agreed to build on the Training Facilities committee's work and to develop an RFI (request for information). The RFI would include training needs, impact of training programs on community colleges and evaluation of existing facilities and be finalized by the end of the summer. Members also expressed concern that the report does not endorse a specific site or location for a state training facility.

A motion by John Cannon, seconded by Al Godfrey, that the Fire Commission accepts the Training Facilities committee's report as presented.

An amendment to the motion by Jeff Maker, seconded by John Dean, to replace any reference in the Training Facilities Committee's report to central facility with state facility. The amendment passed unanimously.

The amended motion passed unanimously.

A motion by Jay Bradshaw, seconded by John Cannon, that the Fire Commission prepares an RFI (request for information) for a statewide training facility. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Fire Commission members discussed the June and November referendums and the potential impact of their passage on the fire service, local communities and the state. Members discussed taking strong positions against the November referendum (Palesky) and combining efforts with other groups. Members also discussed the need for education, holding press conferences and attending local meetings.

New Business

Fire Commission members were informed about the American Home Fire Safety Act, a bill recently introduced in the US Senate by Senator Hollings and Senator Breaux. The bill would extend the safety standards to four products- candles, mattresses, bedding and upholstery- and direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission to enforce the federal safety standards. Members agreed to support the bill and to send a letter of support from the Fire Commission.

Members were also shown a preliminary copy of a report titled "Needs Assessment of the Fire Service- June 2004 " (Maine edition) that was sent to the State Fire Marshal's (SFMO) office. Members voiced concern because of the inaccurate numbers and statistics cited in the report and the inability to verify the data. The report is expected to be posted on the NFPA's website at a future date. The SFMO will review the report and update the Fire Commission.

Fire Commission members received an email regarding USFA (United States Fire Academy) and NFA (National Fire Academy) urging the MFPSC's assistance. The Office of Domestic Terrorism, Department of Homeland Security, has taken over the distribution of federal funds and funding channels have changed. As competition for funding dollars increase, there is concern that NFA may be dismantled and that fire and rescue services will lack access to these important funds. Fire Commission members agreed to send a letter to the Congressional delegation urging their support for USFA and NFA.

A motion by Jack Berry, seconded by Al Godfrey, that the Fire Commission sends a letter of support to Senators Snowe and Collins and Representatives Allan and Michaud urging their continued support of USFA and NFA and their programs. The motion passed unanimously.

Members were informed of two events of interest- review of the Firefighter I training curriculum and the Fire Ops 101 in Augusta on June 12th. Two additional items were distributed to Fire Commission members. Members received copies of an article on recruitment and retention from the Pennsylvania Fireman (April 2004) and a letter from Public Safety Commissioner Michael Cantara regarding the MEMS system assessment.

Fire Commission members were reminded that the MEMS and SFMO will be moving the week of June 21st into their new offices at the Central Maine Commerce Center. The new address is 500 Civic Center Drive, although the state mailing addresses (State House Station) will remain the same. Phone numbers will be changed.

The Fire Commission summer meeting schedule was discussed and members agreed to not meet in July. The Fire Commission agreed to the following schedule:

Monday, August 2 nd	Regular Meeting	CMCC
Monday, September 13 th	Regular Meeting	CMCC
Monday, October 4 th	Regular Meeting	CMCC

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair Darrel Fournier adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Pinette

